

I hope that this minor change will represent a major step for us in bringing back the confidence of the American people that they do not have to blindly go into a case not knowing whether the heavy hand of the law might be weighing against them without their knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, it seems like only yesterday I was speaking on this subject.

This is an important step. I know that we will have broad bipartisan support on it. I hope that we will have not just acceptance but an embracement by the judges who now will be reporting and providing more information to the public that the public has—and particularly litigants—have every right to know before they go before that judge.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair for his help in shepherding this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Framers, in their infinite wisdom, created a system of government with three separate and coequal branches: Article I, legislative branch; Article II, executive branch; and Article III, judicial branch, three separate but coequal branches of government.

Justice Brandeis once said: In a democracy, sunlight is the best of disinfectants. There are standards of transparency and disclosure that already exist as relates to the Article I legislative branch and senior officials within the Article II executive branch. Those same standards of transparency and disclosure allowing for accountability should exist across the three branches of government. This legislation takes a meaningful step in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman ROSS for her leadership. I thank Congressman ISSA for his leadership. I thank Chairman JOHNSON, as well as Senator CORNYN, and those who have worked on this important legislation in a bipartisan, bicameral way.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3059.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE OR TO RELEASE UNITED STATES CITIZEN PAUL WHELAN

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 336) calling on the Government of the Russian Federation

to provide evidence or to release United States citizen Paul Whelan, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 336

Whereas United States citizen Paul Whelan is a resident of Novi, Michigan, and a United States Marine Corps veteran;

Whereas Paul Whelan traveled to Moscow for the wedding of a personal friend on December 22, 2018;

Whereas Russia's Federal Security Service arrested Paul Whelan at the Metropol Hotel in Moscow on December 28, 2018, and charged him with espionage;

Whereas the Federal Security Service has never provided any evidence of supposed wrongdoing;

Whereas Paul Whelan was imprisoned in Lefortovo Prison and was held there for more than 19 months after his arrest in pretrial detention;

Whereas a Moscow court extended Paul Whelan's pretrial detention multiple times without publicly presenting justification or evidence of wrongdoing;

Whereas even Paul Whelan's Federal Security Service-appointed lawyer, Vladimir Zharebenkov, said on May 24, 2019, "[The Federal Security Service] always roll[s] out what they have, but in this case, we've seen nothing concrete against Whelan in five months. That means there is nothing.";

Whereas the then United States Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Jon Huntsman, responded on April 12, 2019, to a question about the detention of Paul Whelan, "If the Russians have evidence, they should bring it forward. We have seen nothing. If there was a case, I think the evidence would have been brought forward by now.";

Whereas then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on May 14, 2019, and urged him to ensure United States citizens are not unjustly held abroad;

Whereas the Kremlin has refused Paul Whelan full access to his lawyer and the so-called evidence against him;

Whereas any evidence he has seen is in Russian, a language Paul does not read or speak;

Whereas Lefortovo pretrial detention facility and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to provide medical treatment for Paul Whelan's medical condition, despite being aware of its worsening state, resulting in emergency surgery on May 29, 2020;

Whereas Paul Whelan was wrongfully convicted on June 15, 2020, and sentenced to 16 years in a Russian labor camp by a 3-judge panel, in a trial witnessed by then United States Ambassador John Sullivan, who referred to it as "a mockery of justice" due to the denial of a fair trial and the exclusion of defense witnesses;

Whereas in August 2020, on an unknown day because he was moved secretly, Paul Whelan was transferred to camp IK-17, a penal labor camp in Mordovia, where he is forced to work 6 days a week in a garment factory;

Whereas Ambassador John Sullivan, while visiting Paul Whelan at the labor camp in Mordovia, stated that "Russian authorities . . . have never shown the world evidence of his guilt," and reiterated his call that the Russian authorities correct this injustice and release Mr. Whelan; and

Whereas Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on February 4, 2021, and urged him to release Americans detained in

Russia, including Paul Whelan and Trevor Reed, so that they are able to return home to their families in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) demands the Government of the Russian Federation present credible evidence on the allegations against Paul Whelan or immediately release him from imprisonment;

(2) demands the Government of the Russian Federation comply with its international treaty obligations and provide unrestricted consular access to Paul Whelan while he remains imprisoned in Russia;

(3) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to provide Paul Whelan, Trevor Reed, and all others imprisoned for political motivations or otherwise unjustly imprisoned their constitutionally afforded due process rights and universally recognized human rights; and

(4) expresses sympathy to the family of Paul Whelan for this travesty to justice and personal hardship, and expresses hope that their ordeal can soon be brought to a just end.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PHILLIPS) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 336, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 336, calling on the Government of the Russian Federation to provide evidence or to release United States citizen Paul Whelan.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative STEVENS for her tireless work on behalf of her constituent, Paul Whelan, whom Russia has held hostage as a political prisoner for over 3 years.

For more than 1,300 days the Russian Government has put Paul and his family through unimaginable torment: taking away Paul's freedom, threatening his health, and denying him his most basic human rights—all for the purpose of using an American citizen—a human being—as a political bargaining chip.

Paul's treatment at the hands of the Russian Government and its so-called justice system is shocking, but unfortunately, hardly surprising.

As we witness the horrors committed by Putin, his enablers, and Russian forces in Ukraine, we are reminded of the lengths that the authoritarian regime in the Kremlin will go to achieve its nefarious objectives. But neither Paul nor any political prisoner is a tool to be used for an end. They are human beings with families who just want to see justice served and see their loved ones home safe and sound.

In light of the horrific treatment Paul has endured, I thank our wonderful diplomats in Russia, particularly Ambassador John Sullivan, as well as Special Envoy for Hostage Affairs, Roger Carstens, working under tremendous pressure from the Russian Government to see that Paul Whelan, Brittney Griner, and other Americans detained in Russia are treated with dignity and that their human rights are respected.

Good news today, we are thrilled that in large part due to their work, Trevor Reed is now on his way home. We cannot stop until Paul's family and other families with Americans detained overseas are given that same relief. These families work tirelessly to remind us that we cannot stop pushing—they deserve that same level of dedication from all of us.

H. Res. 336, calling on the Government of the Russian Federation to provide evidence or to release United States citizen Paul Whelan, takes another step toward securing that safe and swift release of American citizens from unjust detention abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I support this important resolution and thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for introducing it. I urge all Members to vote in support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be here with Congressman DEAN PHILLIPS as we work together, unintentionally united by war criminal Putin, as Democrats and Republicans are united for freedom.

Mr. Speaker, on December 28, 2018, U.S. citizen Paul Whelan was arrested in Moscow. On June 15, 2020, he was sentenced to 16 years in a Putin labor camp. He remains behind bars to this day for a crime he did not commit. No real evidence of Paul's guilt was ever provided, defense witnesses were excluded, and he was denied a fair trial.

U.S. Ambassador John Sullivan described Paul's wrongful conviction exactly right—a mockery of justice. Paul is an American and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. The U.S. Congress cannot remain silent as Paul remains unjustly held by the thug in the Kremlin.

The resolution we are considering today shows we have not forgotten—and will never forget—Paul or any other American wrongfully detained in Russia.

I was thrilled and relieved today to learn that Trevor Reed has been released from his unjust detention in Russia. Trevor, another former U.S. Marine, had spent years behind bars on completely fabricated charges.

However, we cannot rest until Paul and every single wrongfully detained American is home safely with their families as well.

As it launched its full-scale murderous invasion of Ukraine, the Putin regime has stepped up its reprehensible

practice of targeting Americans for unfounded detentions. In February, Brittney Griner, a WNBA—that is the Women's National Basketball Association—player was arrested for allegedly bringing drugs into Russia. She faces up to 10 years in prison, if convicted. I fear she too will be held hostage by the Russian dictator. I appreciate her Member of Congress, SHEILA JACKSON LEE of Houston, for being such an outspoken proponent for her release.

I would be remiss not to mention Vladimir Kara-Murza too. He is one of the fiercest advocates of a democratic Russia, who has been poisoned twice by the Putin regime, and who faces up to 15 years in prison for speaking the truth about Putin's unprovoked war of aggression and murder in Ukraine. He is a brave freedom fighter who does not deserve to be locked up for shining a light on Putin's brutality and corruption.

Putin must stop using innocent Americans as diplomatic pawns and release them immediately.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution so Paul and his family know that the U.S. Congress stands with them, Democrats and Republicans, and will do everything in our power to make sure Paul can join Trevor in coming back home.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS).

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today—as I have every day I have served in this very Chamber—on behalf of my constituent, Paul Whelan, who has been wrongfully detained in Russia since the end of December, 2018.

Throughout Mr. Whelan's detention, the Russian Government has repeatedly violated his rights, denied him proper medical care, and refused to provide any evidence to substantiate the charges against him. He was held in pretrial detention for over 18 months in the notorious Lefortovo Prison. Then Mr. Whelan's trial was held behind closed doors, and his defense was prohibited from calling witnesses. Mr. Whelan now serves a 16-year sentence of hard labor, and he is in his fifties. He is currently being held in a prison camp where he has been since August 2020, facing unbelievably harsh conditions, injury, and illness.

Early this morning the news broke that fellow American, Trevor Reed, a marine and Texan who had also been wrongfully imprisoned in Russia, was freed through a prisoner swap orchestrated by President Biden. This is incredible news.

While this is incredible news for Mr. Reed and his family, let us say in this Chamber that Paul and his family deserve to experience the same joy and relief. Paul has been imprisoned longer than any other detained American in Russia. He has had years stolen from

him, including precious time with his aging parents and siblings. One by one, he has lost his home in Novi, his job, his ability to communicate with friends, his beloved dog, Flora, and so much more. I want to see my constituent of Novi, Michigan, back home.

This innocent man has had his life and his livelihood stolen from him by Vladimir Putin. Today, we have the opportunity as a Congress to denounce Paul's wrongful imprisonment and stand up to the lawlessness of the Putin regime. In the years since Paul's detention, we have seen Mr. Putin further isolate himself on the world stage as his government has dissolved into one of true lawlessness leading to threats and violence. We have all borne witness to the tragic loss of life of thousands of innocent Ukrainians and watched while a democratic nation is being destroyed at the directive of this dangerous war criminal. We must stand up from this Chamber.

I thank my colleagues who have joined us. I thank Mr. KEATING, and I certainly recognize the chairman, Mr. MEEKS, and the ranking member, Mr. MCCAUL, for their attention to this matter.

If Paul is watching this, he will know that I am praying for him, I am rooting for him, and I will never stop fighting for him. Let's pass H. Res. 336 immediately.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from South Carolina for the time, and, of course, I thank my friend, Mr. PHILLIPS, for leading the debate on this important issue.

Once again, we gather on the House floor in unity—Republicans and Democrats—to counter Putin's behavior.

Last year, I cofounded the first Congressional Task Force for American Hostages and Americans Wrongfully Detained Abroad with my friend, TED DEUTCH, from Florida.

I thank Representative STEVENS for being one of the first members of that task force, and that is why I rise in strong support of my friend HALEY STEVENS' resolution which calls for the release of Paul Whelan who is, in fact, unjustly imprisoned in Russia.

We have heard today in the debates some of the details of Paul's arrest and nearly 2 years in pretrial detention with no evidence publicly presented justifying wrongdoing.

All parts of our government, especially Members of Congress, who directly represent the families of those held hostage or wrongfully detained, must engage with friends and enemies alike, to ensure that Americans in situations like Paul Whelan's are expeditiously brought home. Further, Congress must continue to engage with the administration in situations like these to disincentivize the wrongful detention or hostage taking of Americans.

Last year, we passed a similar resolution on this floor in support of Trevor Reed and Paul Whelan. It was, in fact, rewarding this morning to hear that Trevor was released; but, he should have never been held, and the exchange of prisoners should have never been necessary.

But today, Mr. Speaker, on a combined basis, Republicans and Democrats, let us issue a message to Paul Whelan: We have not forgotten you.

And let this message be clear that countries that engage in political hostage taking must stop the disgraceful practice and be held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support Representative STEVENS' resolution.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 336 and, once again, call on the Russian Government to release American citizen, Paul Whelan. I thank my colleague, Congresswoman HALEY STEVENS, for her undying leadership in fighting this travesty—and it is a travesty.

It has now been over 3 years since Paul Whelan—a marine veteran, a Michigan resident, and, most importantly, an American citizen—was imprisoned in Russia without proper evidence or a fair trial. It was a sham trial; that is the messaging Paul wanted to convey to the world as an unjust Russian judicial system handed out a ridiculous sentence. Throughout his detainment, he has also been denied access to proper medical treatment, despite a sharp decline in his health.

Just this week, I returned from Ukraine where Russian atrocities have been on display to the entire world. Make no mistake about that. We saw heartbreaking devastation that has impacted so many lives. But tragically, Vladimir Putin's barbaric behavior is not new. He has no concern for even the most basic of human rights.

Today, the House must send an unequivocal message to the Kremlin: It is time to end the maltreatment of Paul Whelan.

We just learned the good news that Trevor Reed, another American detained in Russia, was released from prison. We are calling for Paul to be next.

I want to close with a message to Paul's dear parents, Rosemary and Ed, who live in my district in Manchester, Michigan; and to Paul's siblings, Elizabeth, David, and Andrew. I know this has been an incredibly trying time for your family. I admire your resolve in the face of adversity. I grieve with you. I pray for you. And I continue to stand with you.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for Paul Whelan to come home to Michigan.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I thank Representative HALEY STEVENS for her work on this resolution. You can tell it is from the heart, and we are working together, again, Republicans and Democrats.

How fortunate we are, with the leadership of Congressman TIM WALBERG, to have spent the Orthodox Christian Easter weekend in Ukraine to visit with Lviv, to be in Kiev, to be in the Bucha region where the atrocities were so horrific, and to be on a delegation with Congresswoman VICTORIA SPARTZ, who was actually born in Soviet Ukraine, and now she has seen it become a free Ukraine. Our country is so blessed by the number of Ukrainians who have come to live in our country and then support their maintenance, victory, and winning for freedom in Ukraine.

As the world watches in horror at the war crimes and atrocities that the war criminal Putin is committing in Ukraine, we must also condemn the Russian dictator's practice of exploiting innocent Americans as political pawns.

I urge my colleagues to join in supporting this resolution. This will send a strong message to Paul and the other wrongfully detained Americans in Russia that Congress will not rest until they are returned home to their families.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

I also thank my dear friend and colleague from South Carolina for delivering to me a Ukraine-United States solidarity pin that I now wear proudly on my lapel.

Freedom is at the core of our American values. It is the backbone of democracy. We have Americans stuck in Russia and around the world being held against their will and without explanation to be used as political bargaining chips.

During this time of horrific atrocities, their safe and secure release is all the more imperative. H. Res. 336 takes action to secure the safety of our fellow Americans, including Brittany Griner and Paul Whelan, who are at the mercy of Vladimir Putin, an evil dictator who has no regard for human life.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PHILLIPS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 336, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ASSESSING XI'S INTERFERENCE AND SUBVERSION ACT

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7314) to require the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a report on the People's Republic of China's support to the Russian Federation with respect to its unprovoked invasion of and full-scale war against Ukraine, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7314

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Assessing Xi's Interference and Subversion Act" or "AXIS Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) On February 4, 2022, weeks ahead of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, Russia and the People's Republic of China released a joint statement following a meeting between Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, which outlined a strategic partnership with "no limits" and no "forbidden" areas for cooperation.

(2) On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in an unprovoked and unjustified act of war.

(3) China abstained from voting on the February 25, 2022, United Nations Security Council resolution and the March 2, 2022, United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

(4) As of April 1, 2022, China has not publicly condemned Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine.

(5) In his call with Xi Jinping on March 18, 2022, President Joe Biden communicated that there would be "implications and consequences if China provides material support to Russia as it conducts brutal attacks against Ukrainian cities and civilians".

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the People's Republic of China's disinformation efforts relating to the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine make it culpable in whitewashing Russia's war crimes, which include the indiscriminate killing of countless Ukrainian men, women, and children; and

(2) if China is found to be materially supporting Russia in its war against Ukraine, there should be swift and stringent consequences for China.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 90 days thereafter, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of National Intelligence as appropriate, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on whether and how the People's Republic of China, including the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party, any Chinese state-owned enterprise, and any other Chinese entity, has provided support to the Russian Federation with respect to its unprovoked invasion of and full-scale war against Ukraine.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include a discussion of the People's Republic of China support to the Russian Federation with respect to—

(1) helping the Government of Russia or Russian entities evade or circumvent United